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ISRAEL TO HALT FIGHTING IN GAZA AS FOOD CRISIS LOOMS

Israeli military's pause is for 10 hours a day and meant to open secure routes for aid delivery to desperate Palestinians

FLOUR, SUGAR AND CANNED FOOD AIRDROPPED

Israel said it would begin a 'tactical pause' in Gaza City, Deir al-Balah and Muwasi, three areas with a large populace, to 'increase the scale of humanitarian aid' entering the territory. The military also said Sunday that it carried out aid airdrops into Gaza, which included packages of aid with flour, sugar and canned food

GLOBAL CRITICISM OF ISRAEL BEHIND MOVE

- Experts have warned for months of the risk of a famine in Gaza, where Israel has restricted aid because it says Hamas siphons off goods to help bolster its rule, a claim that Hamas has denied
- Images from Gaza in recent days of emaciated children have fanned global criticism of Israel, including by close allies | P9

5 lakh

PEOPLE IN GAZA ARE EXPERIENCING FAMINE LIKE CONDITIONS: U.N.

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Parliament set for fiery debate on Op Sindoor

Congress issues whip to its members to be present in LS for three days from Monday

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH the Lok Sabha set to begin a three-day debate on the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor on Monday, the ruling alliance and the Opposition parties have lined up top speakers to put across their points of view.

The Congress on Sunday issued a whip to its MPs to be present in the Lok Sabha.

After a week-long standoff between the Opposition and the Treasury benches, the Monday session is expected to be stormy as some Opposition parties are expected to raise the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) in Bihar as well. However, Union minister Kiran Rijiju has said that every issue cannot be taken up for discussion in Parliament at once.

While Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to open the discussion from the ruling camp, the Congress will field deputy leader of Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi to open the debate. The Congress line-up includes general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi and K C Venugopal, who will speak on the opening day. Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is likely to speak on Tuesday, party sources said. The Congress has been allotted three hours to speak.

Sources said Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will speak, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi may intervene to explain his government's track record on national security.

The whip issued by Congress Chief Whip Kodikunnil Suresh said" "Be present positively in Lok Sabha from 11:00 AM onwards till adjournment of the House on Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday and support the Party Stand. This may be treated as three-line whip".

With 65 minutes allotted for the Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav and Rajeev Rai will speak on the issue.

Besides its battery of leaders like Anurag Thakur, Sudhanshu Trivedi and Nishikant Dubey, the NDA is likely to field members from the multi-party delegations that travelled to over 30 world capitals to present India's case after Operation Sindoor. They include Shrikant Shinde of the Shiv Sena, Sanjay Jha of JD(U), and Harish Balayogi of TDP.

The Rajya Sabha will take up the issue on Tuesday.

Tharoor to speak?

While there is no clarity if Congress will ask Shashi Tharoor to speak, sources said Lok Sabha Speaker can invite him to speak since he led an important delegation

Chola kings' statues will be installed in TN: Modi

P THIRUSELVAM @ Gangaikonda Cholapuram (Ariyalur)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced that statues of emperors Raja Raja Chola and Rajendra Chola I will be installed in Tamil Nadu. Speaking at an event at Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur commemorating 1,000 years of Rajendra Chola I's maritime expedition to Southeast Asia and marking the Aadi Thiruvathirai festival at the temple, Modi said, "While taking pride in the tradition of our Bharat, I take a pledge today that we will install grand statues of King Raja Raja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola I in Tamil Nadu. These statues will become modern pillars of our historical consciousness."

In a 45-minute speech in Hindi, translated into Tamil, Modi spoke at length about the contributions of the Chola emperors and the Shaivite tradition to the country. Referring to the Chola era as one of the golden ages of India, he said, "The Chola kings bound India with the thread of cultural unity. Today, our government is carrying forward the same ideas of the Cholas. We are strengthening these centuries-old threads of unity through events like the Kashi Tamil Sangamam and Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam."

On the Shaivite tradition, Modi said, "Our Shaivite tradition has played a huge role in the cultural formation of India. The Chola emperors were important architects of this heritage. That is why even today, Tamil Nadu is one of the living centres of the Shaivite tradition."

Referring to the Chola rulers' extensive diplomatic and trade relations with Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Southeast Asia, Modi noted the coincidence of his return from the Maldives the previous day. Pointing out that while historians speak of Britain's Magna Carta in the context of democracy, Modi said the Chola Empire had implemented democratic electoral practices centuries earlier through the Kudavolai Amaippu system.

The PM said the legacy of Raja Raja Chola and Rajendra Chola I is synonymous with India's identity and pride.

PM Narendra Modi, TN Governor R N Ravi and other leaders at the Aadi Thiruvathirai event in Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Ariyalur district, on Sunday | EXPRESS

Memo to Modi: Stalin repeats key demands

CHENNAI: In a memo submitted to PM Modi during his visit to Tamil Nadu on Saturday, CM M K Stalin reiterated key demands, including the immediate release of Samagra Shiksha funds, approval for long-pending railway links in TN and a permanent solution to the conflict between TN fishers and Sri Lankan Navy

EXPRESS READ

Centre mulls bringing changes to MV Act

New Delhi: The Centre is working to amend the Motor Vehicles Act to ensure that key guidelines issued by it become binding on states, sources said. The changes would make select Central guidelines mandatory, particularly those related to road safety, vehicle regulation and transport policy | P7

Fake ambassador visited 30 countries

New Delhi: Harshvardhan Jain, who posed as the ambassador of several micronations and ran a fake embassy out of a rented bungalow in Ghaziabad, visited 30 foreign nations nearly 200 times between 2005 and 2015, the STF probe revealed. The STF also found 25 shell companies registered under Jain's name.

Six dead, 35 hurt in Haridwar stampede

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

AN avoidable stampede on the path leading to the Mansa Devi Temple in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, claimed the lives of six devotees on Sunday, while more than 35 were injured, some with critical injuries.

Rumours of a broken electric wire near the stairs to the temple triggered panic among people, leading to the stampede, Haridwar SSP Pramendra Singh Dobal said.

The deceased were identified as Arush (12), Shakal Dev (18), Vicky (18), Vipin (18), Vakil and Shanti.

What began as a routine spiritual journey for hundreds quickly turned into a nightmare. Devotees were making their way to offer prayers or returning after 'darshan' when the rumour caused panic, leading to the tragedy.

"It was sheer chaos. People started screaming about electrocution, and everyone just pushed forward," recounted Pankaj Chaurasia, a devotee who managed to escape. "Those who fell on the narrow, crowded stairwell had no chance. People were trampled as the crowd surged forward."

The incident took place around 9 am. Being a Sunday, a large crowd of devotees had gathered at the temple atop the Shivalik hills at a height of more than 500 feet. Videos from the spot showed a massive rush of people, including children and women, near the temple.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, while announcing a financial assistance of ₹2 lakh to next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured, ordered a probe.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among those who expressed grief over the loss of lives in the stampede. Modi, in a post on X, said: "Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon."

Mahant Ravindra Puri, President of the temple trust, said, "The stampede was caused by someone falling near the temple, not due to a broken wire."

An injured person being taken for treatment after a stampede at Mansa Devi temple, in Haridwar, on Sunday | PTI

Tomato prices to touch ₹85/kg if rain continues in North India

V VELAYUDHAM @ Kolar

TOMATO prices are likely to double if rain continues to lash Maharashtra and northern parts of the country over the next few days. On Sunday, a crate of tomato (15 kg) at the Kolar APMC market, which is the second-biggest market in Asia, sold for Rs 750, while only three days ago, the prices hovered around Rs 250-350 per crate. If the situation continues, by next week, the retail price of tomato would touch Rs 85 per kg in Karnataka, wholesale traders predicted.

Kiran, secretary, APMC market, said heavy rain in Maharashtra, which is a major producer of the crop, has affected supplies to Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Haryana and also Tamil Nadu. This has spurred the demand for tomatoes from Kolar. On Sunday, over 200 vehicles carrying over 2,500 tonnes of the fruit left from the APMC market to different destinations, he added.

Even in Kolar, the demand is high for quality tomatoes as a large number of farmers had not taken up tomato farming as prices were falling steeply over the last four months, he said.

CMR Srinath, a tomato farmer and merchant at the APMC market, said he got information that heavy rain has affected the tomato crop in large areas of Maharashtra. If showers continue in the neighbouring state for another week, the prices at the Kolar APMC market would touch Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,200 per crate, he said.

Bihar SIR: Over 90% voters submitted forms, says EC

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

A day before the Supreme Court is set to hear a batch of petitions challenging the Election Commission of India's decision to carry out a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, the poll panel on Sunday said it has successfully completed the first phase of the exercise to collect enumeration forms.

Enumeration forms were submitted by by 7.24 crore electors (91.69%) out of a total of 7.89 crore, the ECI said.

In an official statement, the ECI said 65 lakh voters will be excluded from the upcoming draft electoral rolls to be published on August 1. These exclusions include 22 lakh deceased voters, 36 lakh who have either permanently relocated or were not traceable, and 7 lakh who were registered at multiple places.

The revision drive aimed to ensure that no elector is left behind, with targeted outreach to first-time voters, urban residents, migrants, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, the panel said.

"The initiative also witnessed a strong political response, with all 12 major parties participating. Notably, the number of booth level agents (BLAs) surged by over 16 percent, with CPI(M) and Congress registering more than a 100 percent increase in BLA nominations. CPI(M) reported a dramatic 1083 rise, while the BJP led in absolute numbers with over 53,000 BLAs, followed by RJD and JD(U)," it said.

The draft rolls, available both online and offline on August 1, will be open for claims and objections for 1 month.

Congress workers in Kolkata protest against Bihar's revision of electoral rolls on Sunday | PTI

INDIA bloc asks EC to discontinue exercise

With over 65 lakh voters at the risk of exclusion after the first phase of Bihar's SIR exercise, INDIA bloc parties on Sunday asked the Election Commission of India to stop the process immediately, alleging that the data is 'flawed'. At a joint conference held by the bloc, leaders said SIR is based on 'opacity' and termed it 'institutional arrogance' | P7

TCS to cut workforce by 2% amid shift towards AI

UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

THE AI storm is finally here, and as feared it is taking away jobs. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest IT services firm, plans to lay off 2% of its global workforce in line with the company's broader strategy to become 'future-ready'. In absolute terms, 12,260 employees in the middle and the senior grades will lose jobs this year. TCS's workforce, as on June 30, stood at 6,13,069.

In a statement, TCS said it is on a journey to become a future-ready organisation, and this includes strategic initiatives including investing in new-tech areas, entering new markets, deploying AI at scale for clients and for the company, creating next-gen infra, and realigning workforce model. "Towards this, a number of reskilling and redeployment initiatives have been underway... We will also be releasing associates from the organization whose deployment may not be feasible," it added.

HR experts directly link such layoffs to AI as it automates tasks. Though TCS has not spoken about AI displacing employees, in a recent post-earnings conference, company officials said they are focusing more on upskilling employees and making them AI-ready.

Aditya Narayan Mishra, MD and CEO of CIEL HR, said AI has emerged as a major disruptor in the IT services industry. "As processes have become standardised, AI tools are handling them with speed and accuracy. This is also redefining the role of people managers, whose traditional responsibilities such as delegating, monitoring, and supporting teams are now being augmented or replaced by AI," he said.

PLOT UNRAVELS

Fearing stigma, woman kills HIV+ve brother

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chitradurga

A woman and her husband allegedly strangled her HIV-positive brother to death as they were ashamed that his infection would stigmatise their family. In a strange unspooling of incidents, the deceased Mallikarjun (23), who hailed from Dhummi village in Holalkere taluk of Chitradurga district, was allegedly strangled to death by his sister Nisha and brother-in-law Manjunath on Sunday.

On July 23, Mallikarjun was heading to his village in a car along with his friends when they met with an accident near Aymangala of Hiriyur taluk. Mallikarjun suffered a fracture in his leg and was initially treated at Chitradurga. He was later shifted to a private hospital in Davanagere, where a routine blood test was conducted. But it revealed that Mallikarjun was HIV-positive. Hospital authorities advised him to get treated at the Kasturba Medical College and Hospital in Manipal.

He was put in an ambulance and as he was being ferried, Nisha and Manjunath, who were accompanying him, allegedly strangled him to death.

Posing it as a death due to his injuries, Nisha and Manjunath shifted Mallikarjun's body to Dhummi for cremation. But the villagers noticed a telltale mark on his neck and raised suspicion. Mallikarjun's father Nagaraj filed a complaint with the Holalkere police, who unearthed grisly details of the murder. Nisha has been arrested.

INDIA IN ENGLAND

Hundred reasons to smile for dramatic comeback

Ravindra Jadeja celebrates his well-fought hundred against England at Old Trafford on Sunday | AFP

TNIE in England
FIROZ MIRZA
@MANCHESTER

RELIEF, joy and exuberance. Those were the emotions running through the Indian dressing room on Sunday evening. Not too long ago, nay hours one may say, they were staring down the barrel, staring at inevitability with awe. England were toying with their bowlers and captain Shubman Gill seemed to have no answer. A lead of 311 runs and India were pushed to the wall.

Any chance of batting out three sessions on Sunday started looking even more grim when England captain Ben Stokes took the ball from the other end and sent back well-set overnight batter K L Rahul. Gill, however, completed his century before a lapse of concentration minutes before lunch cost his wicket.

The job, however, was not over. Ravindra Jadeja picked from from Lord's, and in the company of Washington Sundar, enacted one of India's greatest comebacks. Draws in Test cricket do have dramas and ample was in store as the evening winded towards dull draw. With both the batters closing in on their hundreds England captain wanted to shake hands but India wanted to continue. Though England players livid everything was within the laws. Part-timer Harry Brook was pressed into action and he bowled some donkey drops as both batters got to their respective centuries.

Now, India go into the last Test with head held high and chin up. They will try and give everything at The Oval and draw the series 2-2. P11